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THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST
IRAQI AGGRESSION AND THE CONTINUED OCCUPATION OF KUWAIT IN FLAGRANT VIOLATION OF THE CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS

SECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-sixth year

Letter dated 17 January 1991 from the Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the text of the statement made by Mr. Esmat Abdel Meguid, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, to the Arab and Foreign Affairs and National Security Committee of the Shura Council on 17 January 1991. I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 35 and 153, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Amre M. MOUSSA
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

ANNEX

Statement made on 17 January 1991 by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt to the Arab and Foreign Affairs and National Security Committee of the Shura Council

As I speak to you, I address you in the midst of crucial and delicate circumstances in our region in which the eyes of the whole world are upon us and events are escalating and deteriorating with great rapidity. I have to inform you that, early this morning, I was in touch with a number of ministers for foreign affairs of friendly and brotherly countries so that we could exchange information, consult together and co-ordinate our positions on coping with the effects of this major occurrence.

It may be useful for me to present to you our analysis of the situation and our view of its various aspects and antecedents up to the stage to which matters had developed by the time the operation to liberate Kuwait began early today, 17 January 1991.

Iraq's invasion of Kuwait on 2 August 1990 was an event unprecedented in the history of the Arab nation and indeed in the contemporary era following the Second World War. For the first time, an Arab State was invading another Arab State, occupying its territory, removing its legitimate system of Government by force of arms and then announcing its annexation. In doing so, it established a dangerous international precedent violating inter-Arab and international covenants. Matters did not stop there, but a far-reaching disturbance was brought about in the balance of regional security in the strategically vital Middle East region.

This Committee has been in the forefront in monitoring events in the Gulf from the time the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait took place. It issued a statement on 4 August 1990 which truly captured the pulse of the masses in their condemnation of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and in their demand for an immediate and complete withdrawal of Iraqi forces. Then, on 22 August, a statement by the General Committee was issued supporting the historic and civilized position adopted by President Hosni Mubarak in addressing the crisis and calling upon Iraq to respond to appeals for peace out of a regard for higher Arab interests and in order to save the people of Iraq and the peoples of the region from the scourge of war.

The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and Iraq's concentration of forces on the Kuwaiti-Saudi borders created a situation of concern and a sense of insecurity which impelled Saudi Arabia and some of the Gulf States, in exercise of their inherent right to legitimate self-defence, to request the aid and military assistance of their brothers and friends. That right is established as a principle by article 2 of the Joint Defence and Economic Co-operation Treaty between the States of the Arab League, by article 6 of the Pact of the League of Arab States and by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, it is one long established in international law, and it was reaffirmed by the Arab Summit Conference resolution adopted by the meeting held at Cairo on 10 August 1990.

Egypt responded to the request made by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates in the light of its clear understanding of the challenges and dangers involved and in the context of the responsibility that it bears at the inter-Arab and international levels, given that the Egyptian forces in question provide a shield for the Arab nation as a whole, are helping a brother and are deterring an aggressor.

President Mubarak stressed the leading role being played by the valiant Egyptian armed forces when he said to the People's Assembly and the Shura Council on 15 December 1990: "It was natural for us to respond to the appeal of the fraternal Kingdom of Saudi Arabia ... to take part in the defence of this fellow Arab country ... and of all the Arab peoples of the Gulf region, regardless of the challenges, for this is our mission and our assignment, and we shall assist our brother and repel the deceit of the aggressors".

That courageous stance against aggression was accompanied by assiduous and intensive Egyptian diplomatic activity, particularly in the framework of the League of Arab States, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the United Nations, in an endeavour to do the utmost to avert a devastating war.

In the context of intensive diplomatic efforts, many leaders and eminent personalities in Arab and foreign countries made visits to Baghdad in the attempt to persuade the Iraqi President to listen to the voice of reason and abandon inflexible positions that had no grounds in legitimacy or in law.

Most regrettably, all such efforts and meetings once again confirmed Iraq's position of rejecting the will of the international community.

Following the failure of the Geneva meeting between the United States Secretary of State and his Iraqi counterpart, the Secretary-General of the United Nations went to Baghdad with a mandate from the entire international community to transmit a clear message calling on the Iraqi President to make amends and to choose peace.

Although the Secretary-General announced that his mission had failed because of the intransigence of the Iraqi President, he nevertheless made one last appeal to the Iraqi President calling upon him to withdraw and to banish from the region the spectre of war.

Given Egypt's commitment to its deeply rooted positions of principle, the desire of the Egyptian leadership to preserve Arab solidarity and an appreciation of historical responsibility, President Mubarak spared no effort in striving to contain the tension and the escalation between Iraq and Kuwait. He addressed some 26 sincere and friendly appeals to the Iraqi President since tension began to mount, from the statement of the President of the Republic issued on 20 July 1990 up to that of 15 January 1991 in which he stated that we have no quarrel with the people of Iraq or with the Iraqi President and that the positions we have adopted stem from a profound faith in peace. He sincerely advised the Iraqi President to decide for peace in order to protect the people of Iraq, all the Arab peoples and

all of those peoples which have become involved in the crisis from the disasters of war and from its devastating consequences. A statement concerning these appeals has been deposited with the Committee.

Following this detailed presentation of the efforts made by Egyptian, Arab and international diplomacy, which continued for some six months and which foundered on the rock of the Iraqi President's intransigence and his peremptory rejection of all initiatives and all appeals to restore peace and avert war, I have to tell you that early today the international community proceeded to implement the provisions of the Security Council resolutions relating to the use of force. That force was primarily directed against Iraqi military positions, and it does not have the purpose of destroying Iraq but of liberating Kuwait.

The information available indicates that there is yet time to avoid greater damage should Iraq proceed to a full and immediate withdrawal from Kuwait.

In these crucial moments, the Arab Republic of Egypt reaffirms the demand that it has made since the beginning of the crisis, namely that Iraq must comply immediately with Security Council resolutions reflecting the will of the international community.

Accordingly, Iraqi forces must withdraw from Kuwait fully and unconditionally, and Kuwait must be liberated and its legitimate authority restored, God willing, to the performance of its positive role in the Arab and international structure.

Our region has the greatest need for peace and for the allocation of its capacities to reconstruction and development for the sake of a better future for all our peoples.

In conclusion, I can only beseech the Most High, the Almighty, to safeguard and protect Egypt and to bestow upon it security and safety.